



As a steward of our nation's coastal and marine environments, NOAA addresses immediate and long-term environmental threats through its Office of Response and Restoration (OR&R). Scientists are on call around-the-clock to provide the U.S. Coast Guard and other emergency responders with critical information to help minimize environmental damage caused by oil and hazardous chemical spills. Environmental experts assess ecosystems compromised by historic or ongoing contamination and work with other organizations to conduct remediation, restoration, and monitoring of critical natural resources.

Protecting and Restoring Georgia's Coastal and Marine Areas

NOAA trust resources in Georgia include one-third of the remaining salt marshes along the Atlantic Coast, some of the most extensive and productive in the United States. More than 800,000 recreational saltwater fishing trips are taken each year in coastal Georgia, but chronic contamination has resulted in frequent fish consumption advisories. The state map on the reverse page shows key response and restoration activities in the past year.

Emergency Response

In June 2007, NOAA held an intensive five-day Oil Spill Response and Shoreline Assessment Training course for personnel from federal and state agencies as well as representatives from the oil industry and oil spill response industry in Georgia and South Carolina. Participants learned about the behavior of spilled oil and its effects on different shoreline and habitat types, as well as spill response decision-making strategies. The training was designed to prepare members of the spill community for their participation in the Shoreline Cleanup Assessment Team and to facilitate communication of ideas, concerns, and priorities among agencies, states, and industry.



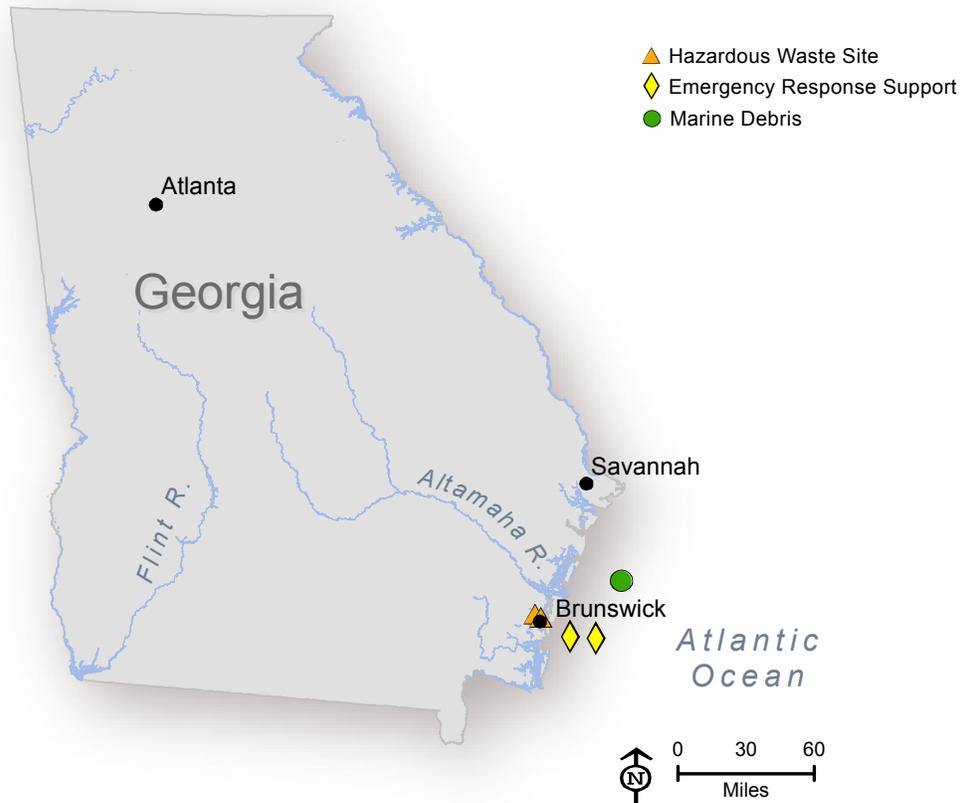
LCP Chemicals hazardous waste site, Brunswick, Georgia

Assessment and Restoration

The LCP Chemicals Superfund Site in Brunswick covers 550 acres, mainly of tidal marsh. An oil refinery, a paint manufacturing company, a power plant, and a chlor-alkali plant have all operated at this site over the last 70 years. Mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) have contaminated the marshes, a one-mile portion of the Turtle River, and the entirety of Purvis Creek. The contaminants have been detected in aquatic life at levels sufficient to produce a ban on commercial fishing in these areas and a seafood consumption advisory for part of the river and all of Purvis Creek. NOAA has worked with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and co-trustees to address imminent threat of PCB and mercury contamination found in wetlands to achieve a long-term protective remedy for natural resources and to develop a list of potential projects to restore injured resources.

Marine Debris

NOAA is working with local fishing groups and diving clubs to assess, monitor, and reduce marine debris in the South Atlantic Bight, home to thriving benthic and fish communities. NOAA's Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary is the only natural area protected off the Georgia coast and the only federally protected ocean bottom habitat in the Bight. A long-term monitoring program will be established to quantify accumulation rates and impacts of marine debris at densely colonized ledge habitat and remove debris from each site. Marine sanctuary scientists will survey debris accumulation annually and expand outreach programs to educate users and the general public about the importance of reducing marine debris inputs.



Research

NOAA collaborates with other federal, state, and local programs to develop innovative approaches to protecting marine and estuarine environments through research and synthesis of information. The Coastal Response Research Center (CRRC) brings together the resources of a research-oriented university and the field expertise of OR&R to conduct and oversee basic and applied research, conduct outreach, and encourage strategic partnerships in spill response, assessment, and restoration.

NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration—Protecting our Coastal Environment

**For further information about NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration,
please call (301) 713-2989 or visit our Web site at
response.restoration.noaa.gov**

Banner photo courtesy of Jim Couch, Georgia Department of Natural Resources

